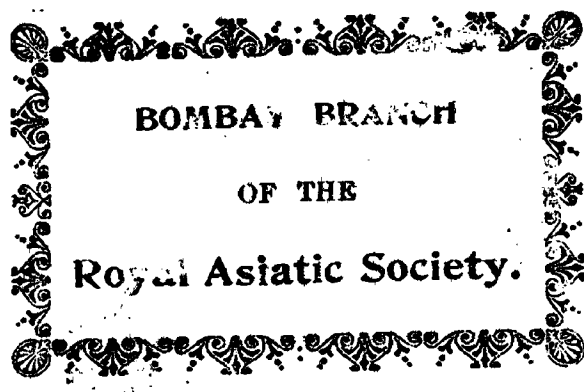

ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
ARCHÆOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT,
Jammu and Kashmir State,
For 1976.

R. P. P. J.—22-9-79—350,



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on 24 February, 2020

Copy of a letter No. 6941, dated Srinagar, the 23rd August 1920 from the Chief Minister, Jammu and Kashmir State, to the Home Minister, Jammu and Kashmir State.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT
FOR 1976.**

With reference to your letter No. 1402/G, dated the 30th July 1920, I have the honour to convey the sanction of His Highness the Maharaja Sahib Bahadur to the publication of the report mentioned above.

Copy of the Home Minister's endorsement No. 1985—G, dated 7th September 1920, on the above.

A8/77

Copy of the above forwarded to the Superintendent of Archæological Department, Srinagar, for information and favour of necessary action, in reference to his office letter No. 235, dated 3rd July 1920.

ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
ARCHÆOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT.

Personnel.

On the reversion of Pandit Hirananda Sastri on the 1st of Assuj 1976 (September 1919), Pandit Ram Chandra Kak took over charge of the Department.

Pandit Jagan Nath, Head Clerk was on privilege leave for one month and twenty-six days.

Pandit Panna Lall, my Typist and Pandit Nand Lal, Copyist in the Home Office effected a mutual transfer of services.

CONSERVATION.

Archæological work of all kinds was, owing to the paucity of funds, considerably circumscribed. In the field of conservation, the activities of the Department were confined to the Mughal garden of Chashma-i-Shahi, where a series of improvements were effected, which have substantially added to the attractions of the garden. The present garden possesses only a remnant of its original dimensions. With the decline of the Mughal Empire, the glories of their pleasure haunts also went on waning until at last, during the late Pathan period of Kashmir history, they were reduced to a most pitiable condition. Rank vegetation encroached upon the lawns and paths; the channels, tanks, and fountains got choked up, and the *baradaris* fell into utter ruin. The Sikhs who succeeded the Pathans, were not remarkable for their artistic taste. It was reserved for Maharaja Ranbir Singh, assisted by his able lieutenant, Wazir Punnu, who was one of the most competent and selfless servants of the State in the Dogra times, to restore them to something of their original beauty. But this process of rejuvenation necessarily entailed some changes in the original plan which must have, by this time, been partly obliterated. Again, as a result of long neglect and the crumbling down of enclosure walls, parts of the garden area had been brought under cultivation. This is notably the case at Vernag, Achhabal and Chashma-i-Shahi. There is ample evidence to show that all these gardens were, originally, considerably larger than they are now.

Chashma-i-Shahi—Of all the gardens which fringe the Dal lake, the one at Chashma-i-Shahi has, during recent years, received the least attention. As the name indicates, the chief attraction of the garden is the truly "royal spring", which is unrivalled in Kashmir for the purity and coolness of its water. This garden and in a still greater degree, the picturesque ruins of Pari-Mahall, the garden-palace of the ill-starred Dara Shikoh, built higher up on the steep mountain slopes, are the most conspicuous objects on the hills which overshadow the eastern shores of the lake.

The garden was for the second time enclosed and relaid by Wazir Punnu; but, as might have been expected, the replanning left much to be desired from the modern archæologist's point of view. The chief features of this season's operations are as follows :—

(a) Replacement of the old plaster floor of the second *baradari* by a new stone pavement;

(b) Straightening out of channels and repairing their flank walls which had given way in places;

(c) Dismantling and rebuilding of the cascade and the two flights of steps adjoining it. The cascade as well as the steps had been inserted into the terrace walls,—a circumstance which had robbed them of the greater

part of their beauty. The steps have now been entirely rebuilt and the cascade brought forward;

(d) The old retaining wall of the uppermost terrace which was built of rubble stones covered with a coat of offensive red plaster, was dismantled. The central portion, immediately on either side of the cascade, was rebuilt. It was proposed to reconstruct the whole anew; but want of funds stood in the way. The remaining parts were therefore sloped and planted with iris;

(e) The spring gushes out of a lotus-shaped basin built in the middle of a raised dais. A *baradari* of lath-and-plaster has been built over it by Wazir Punnu. The platform was built of rubble stone masonry covered with a coat of red lime-and-surkhi plaster. This has been removed, and a stone platform, with a coping of carved lotus petals such as is common in all Mughal work in Kashmir, substituted for it;

(f) The fountain proper had a plain tinned copper tube with a spherical head through which water used to flow. This has been replaced by a stone fountain with a lotus head;

(g) The water from the spring falls in a sheet into a small tank, in the middle of which is another small fountain. This tank was also repaired and the fountain fitted with a stone base;

(h) The enclosure wall was repaired and the old gateway which was daubed with various coats of gaudy paint has been replaced by a more suitable entrance;

(i) Immediately outside the entrance there is an aged *chinar*, round which Wazir Punnu had built a platform. This was in a very bad condition. It has been repaired and another corresponding platform built on the opposite side, a wide passage being left between the two platforms.

(j) The drains for the discharge of surplus water have been repaired;

Speaking generally, the Chashma-i-Shahi garden has been considerably improved, but much remains to be done. Minor defects, which scarcely attracted attention before, are now painfully prominent, because a good deal of what used to keep them in countenance has now been removed. To counteract this not wholly unexpected result, extensive measures of conservation have been proposed, some of which, it is hoped, will be carried out before the end of the working season.

Steps are also being taken to acquire a few plots of land which will serve as a camping ground for such visitors—by no means a negligible number—as are desirous to camp out here. Another improvement suggested is the extension of the cart road right up to the gateway.

Vernag.—I visited Vernag with the intention of preparing an estimate for the thorough and final conservation of the Mughal garden there. The garden has been built by Jahangir who also erected an octagonal stone basin round the spring which gives birth to Vitasta, the largest river of Kashmir. The conservation note has been submitted to the Darbar with this office No. 1112, dated the 17th December 1919, and, it is expected, will meet their approval.

Bandi Temple.—The temple between Uri and Mahora has ever been the most crucial problem of archæological conservation in the State. The conservation note submitted with this office No 56, dated the 13th May 1920 will show the nature of the work to be done here. It is hoped that some of the measures recommended will be executed before the end of the working season.

EXPLORATION AND SURVEY.

No excavations were undertaken this year for want of funds, but a few weeks were spent in making a survey of monuments.

Of all the parts of India, the valley of Kashmir is, perhaps, one of the best known. In the ever-increasing crowds of visitors who annually flock to Kashmir, there are a few who are gifted with an appreciative eye and a facile pen to record what they have seen. Scarcely a year passes without producing something which adds to our knowledge of the country. But the State of Kashmir is a very extensive one and some parts of it, notably the province of Jammu, are still more or less sealed books which the inquisitive eye of the average traveller has seldom opened. This is due chiefly to the want of proper roads and the difficulties in procuring supplies and transport in the comparatively arid and unproductive wilderness of hills and jungle which comprise the Dogra fatherland. It was, therefore, not surprising to find that no adequate survey had, hitherto, been made of the many objects of archæological interest which are to be met with in these districts.

I spent about 24 days touring in the Tahsils of Bhimber and Rajauri.* Owing to the shortness of time and my ignorance, at the outset, of the quality and number of the antiquarian remains in these Tahsils, I was obliged to keep myself only to the high road. But even within these circumscribed limits was revealed a surprising wealth of mediæval Hindu temples, and *baolis* and Mughal structures. A notable fact, and one which adds very considerably to their interest, is that these temples follow in almost every detail the style of the temples of the Kashmir valley. Hitherto, it has been generally believed that, with the exception of a few structures of mixed style in and about the district of Jhelum, there were no temples, on the Punjab side of the Himalayas which bore any resemblance to the so-called "Aryan Order of Architecture" of Kashmir. The two temples at Saidabad, and the one at Panjnara which in dimensions and massiveness of construction compares not unfavourably with the Buniar temple, testify even in their ruins to the piety and magnificence of the builders, who appear to have been none other than the rulers of Kashmir, or the satellites of their court. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the lucky discovery of the coins of Kashmir kings, Vinayaditya (8th century A. D.) and Harsha (A. D. 1089 to 1101), in the fields surrounding these ruins—a fact which seems to indicate that even in the tenth and eleventh centuries when Kashmir was plunged in the throes of internecine civil war, the suzerainty of its rulers over the districts on the southern side of the mountains was by no means shadowy. Furthermore, the discovery of these temples has furnished an important link in the chain of evidence which connects the art of Kashmir with the art of Indian plains.

The *baolis* are mostly assignable to the late mediæval period and, in some cases, even to Muhammadan times. A large number of them seems to have possessed friezes decorated with figure sculpture, the chief motive of which is a row of mailed horsemen marching one behind the other. From their artistic style as well as from the attire of the riders we should not be far wrong in assigning the more modern among them to the early Mughal period, when the country was still held by the local chieftains as vassals of the Mughal Emperors.

The Mughal structures consist chiefly of *Sarais* and the mosques attached to them. It will be remembered that the old Imperial route to Kashmir passed through Bhimber and Rajauri, and crossing the Pir-Panjal pass, entered the valley of Kashmir at the prosperous town of Shupayan. But the Mughal Emperors were the last persons to do any thing by halves. Not only did they construct the most frequented caravan route, which until recent times held its own against all other roads to Kashmir, but they also built sumptuous rest-houses at every stage, and often even at temporary halting places, between the main stages. Most

* A detailed report of this tour has been submitted to the Darbar with this office No. 1293, dated 8th March 1920. It is being published by the Director General of Archæology in India, as a memoir of the Archæological Survey of India.

of these are still in a fair state of preservation. They usually comprise two square courts placed side by side. One of them is a cellular quadrangle with a *baradari* in the middle of one of the sides, and the other, a mere walled enclosure with a *dulan* or *baradari* the back wall of which impinges against the back wall of the *baradari* in the cellular quadrangle. Each *baradari*, comprises three apartments, a hall in the centre flanked by two small chambers. The walled enclosure is called the *Amm-khass*. The entrances, as a rule, consist of a central domed chamber with small side-chambers for sentinels. A double row of arcaded shops intended for itinerary caterers to the Imperial Camp and a small three-domed mosque are added as adjuncts to most of the *sarais*.

The mural decoration of these edifices consisted chiefly of panelled stucco plaster, with a beautifully painted and glazed surface. The best surviving example of this ornamentation is the exquisite little mosque on the Nallah opposite the town of Bhimber. The dado is divided into panels which have a dark-red back-ground fringed with a border of flowers. The upper surface of the wall is decorated with cypresses, palm trees and various kinds of conventional herbage. The general effect of this decoration is extremely pretty.

It will be interesting to note here that in the court-yard of the *sarai* at Chingas, there is a sepulchre which is said to enshrine part of the earthly remains of Emperor Jahangir. Tradition reports that the Emperor breathed his last here on his return journey from Kashmir. The *Empress* fearing the too rapid decomposition of the corpse, had the entrails taken out and buried here. The tomb, which is an ordinary tumulus, has since become an object of sanctity both to the Hindus and Muhammadans, who ascribe many magical virtues to it.

Another curious memento of Emperor Jahangir is a couple of gigantic stone elephants below the summit of the Hathinala pass. A single stroke of lightning has shattered both of them. One is shorn of its rump and head, and the other of part of its head and the *Mahaut*. It is probable that they were erected as memorials to two of the Emperor's favourite elephants who succumbed here to the extraordinary difficulties of the rugged mountain route.

The town of Rajauri. (Sk. Rajapuri) has a much longer history. It was already an important chieftainship in the Middle Ages, as Kalhana makes frequent mention of it in his *Rajatarangini*. With the exception of a few architectural fragments, no remains of its Hindu origin now survive. But that the Mughals also favoured it above all the intervening stages between Bhimber and Srinagar is evidenced by the fact that they built a delightful little garden here. Were it in proper repair, it would not suffer by comparison with some of the Srinagar gardens, except, of course, in dimensions which are rather circumscribed. The garden is built on a bluff overlooking the Tawi Nallah, and commands a very charming prospect. It is nearly square in plan, enclosed by high stone walls, and divided into four smaller squares by two intersecting water channels. One of them contains twelve fountains exclusive of the five (arranged in a quincunx) in the raised tank built at the point of intersection of the water courses. In the middle of the wall which overlooks the river has been erected a two storied *baradari*, the upper floor of which opens on the garden. Admission to the ground-floor is gained from above by two flights of steps. The lower story possesses only half the accommodation of the upper flat, *viz.*, a hall in the middle with a chamber on each side. In an alcove in the hall is a beautiful stone cascade which was fed by the water of the channel, from the garden above.

In spite of the hideous additions made by the local Muhammadan chiefs who succeeded the Mughals and the regrettable neglect at the hands of the Public Works Department, the garden is still a very charming little place, especially in early spring when lilies are in bloom.

Fortresses.—Until recently, the inhabitants of these parts were somewhat difficult to control. The Dogra rulers, therefore, built a number of fortresses at the most strategic points to overawe the turbulent tribesmen. Apart from their

picturesque situation on the summits of the most conspicuous hills in the neighbourhood, these structures do not possess any interest whatever.

MUSEUM.

The most important acquisition of the Museum during the year under report is a set of coloured pictures illustrating the topography &c., of the sacred springs of Kashmir. They were prepared under the orders of the late Maharaja Ranbir Singh of Kashmir, but do not seem to have ever been submitted to him. Among these is a very curious bird's-eye-view of the town of Baramula. It must, however, be remarked that the pictures are chiefly valuable as objects of curiosity, and not as objects of art. The artist does not appear to have possessed the technical knowledge requisite for the performance of the task he had undertaken. He does not even seem to have been gifted with an ordinary perception of the effects of perspective and chiaroscuro. A number of good portraits of Dogra chieftains, including one of the late Maharaja Ranbir Singh, and a couple of Persian pictures were also purchased at the same time.

It has often been remarked that the Museum is too overcrowded,—a circumstance which gives it the look rather of a godown than of an educational institution intended to give practical instruction to the public in the higher branches of Art and Science. As it is impossible, at the present time, at least, to expect the construction of a new building designed for the express purpose of housing the really beautiful collections now exhibited here, the only way of ensuring their proper classification is to economise every possible inch of space. For this purpose special show-cases have been prepared which will to some extent reduce the pressure of space in the Arts section.

An illustrated handbook of the Archæological and Numismatic sections is in preparation. The handbook will include and illustrate only the best preserved and most representative exhibits in the sections.

The Museum garden has also been improved and the approach road which bisected it diagonally has been diverted.

LIBRARY.

Seventy-one books were added to the library during the current year, out of which sixty-six were presented by the Government of India. The annual grant of Rs. 100 is hopelessly inadequate. This does not enable the Department even to subscribe to the most important scientific journals it constantly requires for reference, such as the Indian Antiquary, the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, or the Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal. There is no library in the State which can satisfy this want. A grant of a few thousand rupees would probably suffice to start the nucleus of a historical library in Srinagar. I beg to invite the special attention of the Darbar to this great desideratum.

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Sixty-two photographs were taken, which shows an increase of twenty over the number of the last year. The photographer's work is expected to increase very considerably in 1920—1921.

EXPENDATURE ON CONSERVATION.

About Rs. 9,279 were spent on conservation, out of which Rs. 5,808-10-3 were devoted to the Chashma-i-Shahi garden, Rs. 71-10-0 to Bandi temple, Rs. 851-2-5 to the Avantiswami temple.

RAM CHANDRA KAK,

SUPERINTENDENT, ARCHÆOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT,

Jammū and Kashmir State.

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